1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

head of the family to sign or stamp whenever he received his allocation. I left this job when the malaria campaign finished in 1948 to resume my work in farming. Though farming is an honourable job, it does not suffice for the necessities of life these days and I am now looking for another job in the village. [159] [1944]

'Later on I went to Cairo and Alexandria for a month to "see the world", and to visit the holy tombs in these two cities. Indeed, Cairo is the "Mother of the World". Yes, there is a lot of corruption and impiety, but it is preserved by the big Saints, the Mosques, and the "circles of knowledge" conducted in the Mosques. You can also hear the Koran recited beautifully on the radio, and of all this there is nothing in Silwa. [1988]

'I occupied some of my spare time in writing letters for some men and women who are illiterate, and who have relatives in Cairo or Alexandria, asking them for financial help or for clothes.'

On asking him to mention the important events in his life, he recorded:

'With regard to the important events in my life, I here refer to the incident that happened when I was very young playing with other children near the railway station. My playmates started to throw stones at each other and when I started doing the same, my stone smashed one of the glass windows of the building. I tried to escape the railway guard, but he caught me and I was sent to the omda who gave me three strokes with a stick, and my father had to pay for the repair of the glass. [1938]

'The second event I remember was my inability to speak for some time when I was fifteen years old. My parents were worried about it, and they took me to various Saints' tombs and religious men for treatment. At last they took me to a Saint's shrine near Isna, called Sheikh Al-Naggar, who is considered to be the best healer for such diseases, especially when one is "mounted by spirits" (jinns). There, with my mother, we spent a week, and from that time I was cured. [1955]

The third important event besides my marriage, occurred this year when I deputized for my father on a visit to Bardis, on the invitation of our "cousins" there who wanted to establish their holy descent.'

In assessing Ali's life with regard to his point of view as an informant he is in many ways representative of the learned section of the village population. He not only knows the Koran and is well-versed in religion, but he is also well aware of his mundane and practical duties. The greatest number of the learned men (Khotaba) of the village are either blind, lame, or landless. Ali, on the other hand, is a religious man who has occasionally performed religious functions on ceremonial occasions, and he is also a farmer who works in the fields. He takes part in reading the 'Prophet's Story' during the night-celebration of the Prophet's birth in his clan's guest house, and occasionally reads parts of the theological books on canon law (Fikh) to enlighten himself as well as other people on their religious duties. He is also called upon to write deeds and records, since his handwriting is excellent. He once told me that he took great pains